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Inquiry: Since oxygen is considered a medication, can non licensed hospital personnel place a patient on oxygen? For example, can a transporter or x-ray tech, remove the patient from the wall oxygen and connect the patient to a portable oxygen tank, transport the patient and connect them back to the wall outlet? Do they need a license or can they be trained to do this task? If not, what licensed personnel (OT, PT, LVN, etc.) can connect the patient to oxygen?

Response: Section 3702 (d) of the practice act speaks directly to your question regarding the safe administration of medical gases in accordance with the prescription of a physician. There is also similar language in the nurse's practice act and other practice acts that allow for the administration of medications. Since oxygen still requires an order by a physician or protocol to administer, I would recommend that an appropriate licensed individual direct its administration. Anything short of that would represent a safety risk to the patient that could result in the wrong concentration, the wrong medical gas or other serious consequences.

Reference # 2003-C-17